archive.today
webpage capture

Saved from http://web.archive.org/web/20150514192506/http://anolen.com/2013/07/ search
no other snapshots from this url
1 Sep 2017 22:36:47 UTC

Original http://anolen.com/2013/07/
no other snapshots from this url
14 May 2015 19:25:06 UTC

All snapshots from host anolen.com
from host archive.org

Webpage Screenshot

share download .zip report bug or abuse donate

A.NOLEN

Assaulting Mt. Helicon: Writing and Current Affairs.

monthly archives: JULY 2013

MARCONI LIVES

"Confound their Politics, Frustrate their knavish tricks…"

Wow! It's been a fun week in the press so far.

If you were interested in my post on Guglielmo Marconi and the military outsourcing empire he created, you'll enjoy this article on Serco, the "company that is running Britain".

Serco runs Britain's ballistic-missile early warning system, the National Nuclear Laboratory, a rash of prisons and ancillary services, hospitals, school inspections… and runs them without attention to quality or accurate billing!

Serco is the grandchild of the Marconi Company, which spawned RCA with the help of General Electric and the US Navy. (RCA is the firm that birthed 'American television' with Ed Bernays.) In 1986, the circle was completed when General Electric took RCA over, and broke it up into several companies, one of which is Serco, Britain's leading government outsourcing conglomerate.

> *[Serco is] A very significant player, in other words, and one that has come a long way since its foundation 1929, when it was a branch of the American RCA corporation called RCA Services Ltd, involved in the then booming UK cinema industry. It was renamed Serco in 1987, after a management buy-out, and floated on the stock exchange the following year. In the 25 subsequent years, during which the UK has grown ever-fonder of outsourcing and privatisation, Serco has grown at an amazing rate.*

Serco receives very little press, but what it does has been bad: particularly their mismanagement of Thameside prison, hospitals, and charging something like GBP 50 million for "tagging offenders" that it did not "tag". ("Tagging" is called "electronic monitoring" in the USA). Small accounting error?

The only thing that Serco seems to be good at is winning government contracts, and the British leadership do not know exactly how many contracts Serco has won. Serco's revenue from government work is about 40% of total revenue, and *The Guardian* estimates that 90% of Serco's staff are ex-government.

So, what Serco *actually* does is to take over public services and rent them back to the government, while operating said services outside of public scrutiny. Not much changed in 80 years.

But Britain isn't the only country that's suffering:

> *Among their scores of roles across the planet, Serco is responsible for air traffic control in the United Arab Emirates, parking-meter services in Chicago, driving tests in Ontario, and an immigration detention centre on Christmas Island, run on behalf of those well-known friends of overseas visitors the Australian government.*
>
> *In the US, the company has just been awarded a controversial $1.25bn contract by that country's Department of Health.*

One final question: does “Serco” stand for “Service Company” like “Ingsoc” stands for…

LEAVE A COMMENT

IS THIS SMART?

A *Russia Today* article on the death of a ‘hacker’, who was about to expose how pacemakers could be used to remotely kill someone at this week’s ‘Black Hat’ conference, concludes with the following paragraph:

> *Black Hat is scheduled to begin Wednesday in Las Vegas, with a presentation by NSA Chief Gen. Keith Alexander. It will be immediately followed by the Def Con hacker conference, which will be taking place just down the road. Researchers at Def Con plan to demonstrate various high-profile hacks, including how modern cars can be compromised.*

Is this just Russian propaganda? Let’s check the conference website.

Zero-Nine-Hundred July 31.

Gen. Alexander is the keynote speaker kicking off ‘Black Hat’. Check out the sponsors. If security is important to you, don’t hire these guys.

Perhaps, Gen. Alexander, now is not a good time. My recommendation is for you to call your secretary and cancel this engagement. Don’t forget to send back the money.

Read the full article here:

Hacker dies days before he was to reveal how to remotely kill pacemaker patients

LEAVE A COMMENT

THE FABULOUS MARCONI

Snicker, snicker.

Edward seems to be settling into Russian life, so it’s time for the Free World to roll up its sleeves *and improve itself*.

I’ve stated before that the most important of Snowden’s revelations is that private companies, like Microsoft, Google, Yahoo, Facebook, Verizon, Apple… cooperated with the NSA to violate innocent people’s rights. This isn’t about ‘protection’, this is about the NSA’s, and its supporters’, fundamental contempt for the people they pretend to serve. This is about how private companies collaborate with thugs.

What does any of this have to do that radio guy Marconi? Quite a bit, actually, because the Marconi Company was to the British Empire what Microsoft is to the American. Yeah, *that bad*. Of course, the London/Marconi collaboration was corrupt from the start, as evidenced by the ‘Marconi Scandal‘, but this private/public intelligence partnership also had wide-reaching fallout that undermined public discourse, and therefore democracy, for decades. In fact, I’m not sure that the damage ever stopped.

The Marconi Company was given an exclusive contract to set up the British Empire’s wireless communications system; this contract was bought through bribery and insider-trading. Marconi had developed his radio system by partnering with the British Military through the course of the Boer War, the first time radio technology was successfully used. Marconi then built a company based on the war-time technology, which serviced private and public entities AND stationed Marconi’s men at the information pulse-points. Francis Walsingham would be proud.

This is how military/private tech partnerships undermine democracy:

military money develops technology during war-time; said technology is sold back to law enforcement; private firm capitalizes on information flow from said technology free from public scrutiny.

Cozy, eh? And it's still going on today.

In an interview with USAToday about the Snowden leaks, J. Kirk Wiebe makes the following statement (it's in the video, NOT the transcript):

> *The other piece of this was we weren't just trying to talk about privacy, the way that the government was going about deriving intelligence from digital data flows was poor form, uninformed.* ***There seemed to be more of a desire to contract out, cause a money flow, than there was to actually perform the mission.*** *And Tom [Drake] can tell you– is professionally trained in how major organizations acquire major capabilities, and he saw none of it, right Tom?*

It's not just Booz Allen Hamilton. Way back in 1999 Lotus (of Lotus Notes fame) was caught collaborating with the NSA to give the spooks access to foreign clients' emails. (Perhaps the NSA should look into a copy of Lotus Notes International Edition for themselves, so they can search their own emails in regard to FOIA requests. Cough, cough National Geographic Channel.) IBM even wrote a Red Book on how the Lotus/NSA trapdoor works. (Embarrassed of what?)

Also in 1999, Microsoft was outed for supplying the NSA– and an UNKNOWN THIRD PARTY– with a backdoor into Windows.

Now, I'm pretty sure 9-11 happened on 9-11-2001. The NSA's sneaky data gathering isn't about the Patriot Act. This isn't about 'terror'. This is about the naked quest for information and power; a *lawless* quest for power by the intelligence community, information conglomerates and complicit congressmen (all 217 of them).

Power-hungry people have always wanted monopolies over information pathways. It's what spying is about. That's never going to change. What can change is the public's attitude toward the spies, and their helpers, who run protection rackets like PRISM. In order to reign in these monsters, it's helpful to study their behavior in the past.

Who was Guglielmo Marconi?

Marconi was half-Italian, half-Scotch-Irish; he was the son of an Italian land-owner and Annie Jameson, granddaughter of James Jameson, the whiskey producer. Consequently, he had a very privileged upbringing and ran in well-connected circles.

Marconi invented a crude wireless device in his early twenties, but couldn't find investors in Italy. He went to Britain, and with the help of the Italian ambassador in London, Marconi found a champion in William Preece, the Chief Electrical Engineer of the British Post Office.

There are a few important things to understand about the British Post Office. This office provides an invaluable service connecting friends and family through the mail. They also provide, and have done since 1660, important intelligence information to the British government (and other parties).

Marconi's post-office connections made him the British Army and Navy's go-to man for wireless signal matters. The first use of wireless communication was in the Boer War; where the Marconi company supplied **both** the Boers and the British with wireless equipment. (The Boer and British understanding of wireless communications were equally sophisticated.) Through the course of that ugly war The Marconi Company solidified its relationship with Britain's armed forces, becoming a primary contractor.

The Marconi Company was also an early example of intelligence outsourcing via contractors: Marconi paved the way for Booz Allen Hamilton, *et alia,* when it was awarded the contract to deal with the Empire's wireless transmissions, a system which would act as back-up to the All Red Line, the nerve system of the Empire. Naturally, such an arrangement was fraught with scandal.

Back then, the "money flow" ran from the Attorney General, Rufus Isaacs, to his brother on the board of the Marconi company. Isaacs arranged– for his friends– a discounted purchase of shares in the American Marconi Company just before the British government contract was awarded.* The Postmaster General Herbert Samuel (Marconi's way-in to British coffers) and the Chancellor of the Exchequer David Lloyd George were also part of this insider-trading. The treachery goes deeper: the British Treasury bent over backwards to make sure Marconi got the contract.

But Marconi was busy in other places beside Great Britain; he was busy building a global intelligence network. Marconi operators staffed Marconi machines: for instance, the wireless operators on board the Titanic worked for Guglielmo, not The White Star Line. Marconi had his finger on the pulse of wireless communications, and everybody wanted a slice.

A consequence of this is that The Marconi Company became thoroughly embedded in Britain's military-industrial complex; as did the Marconi Company's American subsidiary via the US Navy and Edison's General Electric. The American Marconi subsidiary became RCA.

Now, I think that even young people will recognize these companies' names. Why? Because they played such a pivotal role in developing the USA's entertainment and communication establishment. For better or for worse, what the USA listens to, the world listens to.

That fact should give us all pause for thought, because from its very inception, radio technology was tied to the military wherever this technology was being developed. Mass public communication followed closely behind, with RCA and it's shadowy leader David Sarnoff (formerly one of Marconi's men), developing television in the USA; and EMI, the heir to the Columbia Graphophone Company/Gramophone Company merger,

doing the same in Britain under close collaboration with the BBC. (BBC: propaganda platform and employer of George Orwell. Read Orwell's resignation letter here— "Your propaganda is sh*t!") I digress.

Sarnoff worked closely with Edward Bernays to develop early standards of American television programming. Bernays was Sarnoff's paid adviser, and the author of *Propaganda* (1928), in which he argued that manipulating public opinion was essential in a democracy. (Essential to whom? To thugs with power-lust?)

In 100 years what will Bill Gates', or Steve Jobs', or Mark Zuckerberg's, or Larry Page's/Sergey Brin's biography look like?

Journalists who drew attention to the Marconi scandal were silenced with libel lawsuits. (Rich Brits' favorite way to bury uncomfortable truths.) The Marconi/Navy collaboration provided a megaphone for men like Edward Bernays. The rule of law and democracy were undermined.

I wish that the British public had quashed the Marconi deal when their leaders' treachery was first outed. They could have done it by *taking away the money*. Fortunately, most of my representatives voted the right way on the Amash amendment, but for the ones who 'pizza'd when they shuda've french-fried', a lot of work needs to be done. ***Take away the money***.

*This story was broke by G.K. Chesterton's brother, read all about it in Ffinch's biography of G.K. Chesterton, p. 204.

2 COMMENTS

SAATCHI FAMILY VALUES

Calling Bettie Page?

We're going back to our roots today by looking at two Orwell essays from his collection *All Art is Propaganda*. Both essays explore power-worship. This topic is timely, because of the violent, and very public, break-up of Charles Saatchi and Nigella Lawson.

What does power-worship have to do with Saatchi and Nigella? Nigella blended her private and public life to sell a special form of power-worship. Her relationship with Saatchi had more than a hint of power-worship. The dysfunction in their relationship mirrors the problems that Orwell identified in society when power-worship becomes the dominant ethos.

So, power-worship has everything to do with this power-couple. And Orwell's got something to say about that. On with the show!

The first essay, *Benefit of Clergy: Some Notes on Salvador Dali*, was scheduled for print in 1944, but its British publisher shelved it on grounds of obscenity. *Benefit of Clergy* is a review of *The Secret Life of Salvador Dali*, a book Orwell characterized as "a strip tease act conducted in pink limelight". To Orwell, Dali is the epitome of power-worship and the desire to be worshiped. Dali wants to be Napoleon.

The second essay, *Raffles and Miss Blandish*, was also written in 1944, but published in *Horizon,* the British magazine from which the CIA/IRD-funded *Encounter* (1953-1990) would later draw editorial talent*. (IRD, the Information Research Department, was the British spying organization to which Orwell handed over his list of communist "fellow travelers" in 1949; a list which included *Encounter's* future editor Stephen Spender. Red scare or red recruitment drive?) *Raffles and Miss Blandish* is about the moral decay of crime stories over the period 1900-1940; Orwell believes this moral decay is attributable to power-worship.

The personality cult of Dali and the genre-wide power-worship in crime fiction display similar symptoms, according to Orwell. Power-worship is expressed sexually as sadism and masochism. It is expressed ethically as lawlessness.

Let's draw some parallels.

Saatchi made millions as an art promoter, not just any promoter, but promoter to the richest artist in the world, Damien Hirst. Hirst's art is famous for preserved sharks, rotting cow heads etc.

Dali was an art promoter– he made millions selling rotting cattle as art. Actually, Dali was selling donkey carcasses to well-heeled saps before Damien was a glint in his father's eye.

Dali was a necrophiliac and sadist. He bragged about his narcissism. He liked to hurt women, or dream of hurting them, physically and emotionally. He liked to suck up to rich and powerful people. Dali thought that the normal rules didn't apply to him.

Dali's wife Gala was a masochist. Her idea of foreplay was to ask her husband to kill her, which annoyed Dali: he was titillated by the thought of killing her, but the fact that she *wanted* him to do it was a turn-off.

I don't know anything about Saatchi's sex life. I do know that he likes to hurt women, physically and emotionally. He likes to suck up to powerful people. He enjoys his power in the art-world and is phenomenally arrogant. I know that Saatchi's marriage to Nigella is abusive; he thinks this abusiveness is normal; and that *he* filed for divorce. There's a lot of Dali in Saatchi, and it's likely there's some Gala in Nigella.

It's not hard to see how Saatchi's behavior is violent and lawless. But what about the worshiper? What part does Nigella own?

Nigella Lawson: the domestic goddess, the "queen of food porn". What is she selling? Her television personality is a whored-out Delia Smith minus culinary expertise. Nigella isn't selling food, she's selling the fantasy of a 'kept woman', which– if we're honest– has more appeal to most women than dreams of corporate stardom.

What do I mean by 'kept woman'? My first introduction to the concept was at a cocktail party hosted by a gay couple, one of the guys was a friend of my parents, and my folks had not yet met his partner. The partner turned out to be a muscular fellow who cultivated a biker mystique. When their introduction reached the *'What do you do?'* phase, my mom answered that she was a housewife. The partner hissed: "I wish *I* could be a kept woman!", then stomped away in a huff. His better half didn't know what to say.

Since then, my understanding has evolved: a kept woman is *used* in private and valued in public. She is sexually desirable, and therefore a prized object. A warm pie cloistered behind closed (luxurious) doors. She *serves* whoever owns her, and that's fine by her, as long as her owner is powerful and prestigious. What bursts the fantasy? 1) When her owner looses prestige or 2) When she's no longer valued. When she's taken for granted.

The sales pitch exploded very publicly for Saatchi's soon-to-be ex-wife; it exploded via option two. Her public/personal life will never seem as glamorous again.

The 'Kept Woman Fantasy' is not the foundation of a healthy marriage. But it is an expression of power-worship *from the viewpoint of the worshiper*. When Dali was young, he found his own "Maecenas" in the Vicomte de Noailles, but through arduous self-promotion Dali was eventually able to swap roles.

It's easy to sympathize with Nigella in her time of humiliation. However, the damage Saatchi did to her is a natural consequence of the lifestyle-choice she cashes in on. A worshiper will attract someone who wants to be worshiped. Saatchi was an ass long before Nigella married him.

The Nigella/Saatchi saga displays facets of what Orwell saw happening throughout the Anglosphere. How did power-worship kill crime stories? According to Orwell, power-worship devalues ethical conduct and replaces the rule of law with "might makes right".

> *Until recently the characteristic adventure stories of the English-speaking peoples have been stories in which the hero fights* against odds*. This is true all the way from Robin Hood to Popeye the Sailor. Perhaps the basic myth of the Western world is Jack the Giant Killer, and there already exists a considerable literature which teaches, either overtly or implicitly, that one should side with the big man against the little man. Most of what is now written about foreign policy is simply an embroidery on this theme, and for several decades such phrases as "play the game," "don't hit a man when he's down" and "it's not cricket" have never failed to draw a snigger from anyone of intellectual pretensions.*

Orwell compares the Sherlock Holmes stories to Edgar Wallace's writing.

> *He (Sherlock Holmes) reasons logically from observed fact, and his intellectuality is constantly contrasted with the routine methods of the police. Wallace objected strongly to this slur, as he considered it, on Scotland Yard, and in several newspaper articles he went out of his way to denounce Holmes by name. His ideal was the detective-inspector who catches criminals not because he is intellectually brilliant but because he is part of an all-powerful organization.*

What type of behavior goes hand-in-hand with this power-worship? Violence and sadomasochistic exploitation. Orwell goes on to describe the subject matter of a typical 1940s crime novel:

> *The book contains eight full-dress murders, an unassessable number of casual killings and woundings, an exhumation (with careful reminder of the stench), the flogging of Miss Blandish [and her repeated rape- a.nolen], the torture of another woman with red-hot cigarette ends, a strip-tease act, a third-degree scene of unheard-of cruelty, and much else of the same kind. It assumes great sexual sophistication in its readers (there is a scene, for instance, in which a gangster, presumably of masochistic tendency, has an orgasm in the moment of being knifed), and it takes for granted the most complete corruption and self-seeking as the norm of human behavior.*

Where does power-worship lead us? Lawlessness. The rule of policy. The personality cult of the dictator.

> *In America, both in life and fiction, the tendency to tolerate crime, even to admire the criminal so long as he is successful, is very much more marked. It is indeed ultimately this attitude that has made it possible for crime to flourish upon so huge a scale. Books have been written about Al Capone that are hardly different in tone from the books written about Henry Ford, Stalin, Lord Northcliffe and all the rest of the "log cabin to White House" brigade.*

And…

> *It is a daydream appropriate to a totalitarian age. In his imagined world of gangsters Chase is presenting, as it were, a distilled version of the modern political scene, in which such things as mass bombing of civilians, the use of hostages, torture to obtain confessions, secret prisons, execution without trial, floggings with rubber truncheons, drownings in cesspools, systematic falsification of records and statistics, treachery, bribery and quislingism are normal and morally neutral, even admirable when they are done in a large and bold way.*

Does Orwell's list remind you of anything? Drones, preemptive war, puppet governments, disposition matrices, "least misleading" answers… lawlessness.

Orwell believed art was vitally important because it teaches people how to think. What does power-worship look like through the lens of the Anglo-American public?

> *People worship power in the form in which they are able to understand it. A twelve-year-old boy worships Jack Dempsey. An adolescent in a Glasgow slum worships Al Capone. An aspiring pupil at a business college worships Lord Nuffield. A* New Statesmen *reader worships Stalin.*

Santa Muerte? Obama? Hollywood? The hierarchy of academia, the military, etc? Which alter do you worship at? Has Gala crept into your life?

Power-worship was such a disgusting, modern phenomenon to Orwell that he was forced to make a concession to something he hated almost as much: the Britain of his grandfather. At least grandpa's mores set some limit to depravity. He compares a 1910 crime novel to one from 1940:

> *Comparing the schoolboy atmosphere of the one book with the cruelty and corruption of the other, one is driven to feel that snobbishness, like hypocrisy, is a check upon behavior whose value from a social point of view has been underrated.*

IMHO, that's a terrible sentence with a profound meaning. Let's switch off the food porn.

**Encounter* was set up despite an agreement between the CIA and the British government that the spying agency would not spend money propagandizing in Great Britain. Contrary to the wishes of his ELECTED government, Kim Philby was the MI6-CIA liaison for *Encounter*. (Note how MI6 is not abiding by instructions from outside itself.) The Foreign Office was also in on the plot, the aim being to promote an anti-Soviet leftist agenda with the help of a lot of rich people.

You'll probably have noticed that the CIA drew many agents from Orwell's milieu, that is, Western-educated, elitist, socialists. You may remember from my previous posts that when the Brit Stephenson staffed the OSS, he hired a hell of a lot of Soviet double-agents. Other UK-USA joint propaganda operations, like *Encounter*, were the brainchild of CIA/MI6/IRD agents with pronounced leftist sympathies– and loyalties beyond their respective elected governments.

Is socialism just a euphemism for serfdom? Are the blue-stockings rolling back 200 years of citizens' rights? What's the least untruthful answer?

4 COMMENTS

LATEST FROM SHEREMETYEVO

I watched Edward Snowden's press conference live today on Russia Today; and by 'live', I mean I watched the airport door behind which Snowden's press conference supposedly took place.

There were only eight people allowed into the meeting, and according to The Guardian, they included:

> *AP reports the following people were at the meeting: Vyacheslav Nikonov, the Russian MP, Sergei Nikitin, head of Amnesty International Russia, Tanya Lokshina of Human Rights Watch, Vladimir Lukin, Russia's presidential human rights ombudsman, and attorney Genri Reznik.*

Tanya Lokshina seemed to be the only attendee who appreciated the weight of responsibility on their shoulders; the others were disappointing, frankly. A foppish older man with long white hair (the AI rep?) looked rather self-satisfied and preened in front of the cameras, the Russian representative who spoke to RT quipped about Snowden's "great

haircut". FYI, Snowden looks thin and disheveled, obviously he hasn't seen a barber in a while. And then of course, there's Putin's parrot-like statements about Snowden damaging Russia's US partners.

Clearly, I shouldn't expect anything more than this from the Russian leadership, as brighter people than me noticed a long time ago that they are just partners to American organizations like the NSA. They could have made a lot of hay here though, by shutting up and sticking to their story that "Snowden hasn't technically entered Russia, etc". As it stands, they now hold a sword over Snowden's head because they can, arbitrarily, decide to revoke his asylum at any time by claiming his patriotic acts are hurting Russia's big 'ole buddy. Putin's behavior goes to show that Russia is also complicit in NSA privacy violations– they will assist Snowden as long as none of the sh*t sticks to them.

I've given up on expecting professional– or even smart– behavior from America's leaders.

I hope that in the next few days Snowden's Russian asylum request is 'found', his name is spelled correctly, and he has enough time to get to one of the Latin American embassies in Moscow.

I wish I had more faith in organizations like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, but sadly, I don't think they will really help Snowden if their interests are threatened. My reasoning is that AI and HRW tend to be thin on the ground when the rights of unpopular people are violated. I have yet to hear American/British pundits slam AI and HRW as they've slammed Assange and Wikileaks, which may tell you something about these organizations' political affiliations. But, it's morning in America, and the shills are still shaking off their hangovers.

Perhaps 'sad' isn't the right word to describe Snowden's situation, because he has said that the USA is a country worth dying for. Read his latest statement here.

It's an embarrassing time to be American right now. "Megalomaniac" is too tame to describe the Obama administration. How long have we been clucking about our freedoms, moral high-ground, exemplary government– all while this cancer spread in Washington? As I hope that I've made clear through my blog, Washington's cancer has had at least 70 years to spread. It's gonna take work to cut it out.

Whatever happens to Snowden, I hope that the American people, and reasonable people everywhere, don't waste what he's given them.

Finally, I'm feeling a little guilty myself. A few days ago I posted this:

> *If I worked for the NSA, or any of the other complicit spying organizations, I'd have a very hard time going to work in the morning. It seems that some NSA employees are even scared of the people on the street around them.* ***Are they scared of each other, too?***

I wrote this before I heard anything about Obama's Insider Threat Initiative. That's the initiative where government employees are encouraged to snitch on each other, especially if one of their colleagues has political views that "support the underdog", belong to Gen Y or have financial/marital problems. Read Deloitte's (management consultants) presentation on 'insider threats' for the FISSEA Conference 2012. Gaithersburg, MD is a scary place to live.

I feel as though my attitude in the quote above is grossly inappropriate: like kicking a wounded animal or making fun of a disabled person, because a lot of government employees are *very* scared of each other, and for good reason. There are probably people at the NSA etc. who are scared to leave, and while fear isn't an excuse for weakness, it's understandable. Government employees, like anybody else, can make stupid decisions that trap them later in life and a young person could join up believing what they're doing is for the greater good. (No doubt that some NSA work is good on balance.)

The current climate of fear amongst public servants and others who depend on the government for their livelihood may explain some pundits' nonsensical comments on Snowden, and some of the knee-jerk accusations that security professionals have made against the whistle-blower. (I think that the only country Snowden hasn't been accused of being a double-agent for is Israel.)

For the sake of every well-intentioned person involved, I hope that we don't waste this opportunity to restore the rule of law.

LEAVE A COMMENT

The Adobe Flash Player or an HTML5 supported browser is required for video playback.
Get the latest Flash Player
Learn more about upgrading to an HTML5 browser

Video recorded June 6th 2013.

Snowden understood how apologists for the NSA and its collaborators would try to defend themselves: they would yell "traitor", "extremist" while downplaying the truly important (and very damaging) revelations that Snowden has made.

The most important of these, in my opinion, is how American information technology companies, like Facebook, Microsoft, Google, Apple collaborate with the NSA by providing the spies with direct access to user data, in a sort of 'don't ask don't tell' arrangement. A few weeks ago I wrote wondering how Snowden's leaks would be spun in these firms' favor– after all, a lot of money was spent to set up these very valuable information corridors.

It seems that the companies' defense has been two-pronged. At first, the claim was 'we were just following the law'– though it's very difficult to make that one fly, seeing as Congress, the nation's law-making body, was kept in the dark about what the NSA was doing AND seeing as the NSA's judicial oversight, like the FISA court, is so woefully ineffectual and uninformed.

The second defense has been 'don't talk about the companies'. There have been many attacks on Snowden–some laughably childish. There's been endless hand-wringing about what his revelations will do to the USA's already-strained foreign relations. To most people, these aren't the things that matter.

What matters to most people is that their computer programs- programs which they spend a large part of their waking life sitting in front of- are being used to spy on them.

Every laptop that runs these programs is a bug. The good news is that the software market has just opened wide for non-US-aligned developers.

We know about Microsoft, Facebook, Google… but how many other firms are in this cozy relationship with the National Security Agency?

In his interview with USAToday, William Binney, a widely-respected NSA whistle-blower himself, makes the following observation:

> ***Q: What did you learn from the document — the Verizon warrant issued by the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court — that Snowden leaked?***
>
> ***Drake:*** *It's an extraordinary order. I mean, it's the first time we've publicly seen an actual, secret, surveillance-court order. I don't really want to call it "foreign intelligence" (court) anymore, because I think it's just become a surveillance court, OK? And we are all foreigners now. By virtue of that order, every single phone record that Verizon has is turned over each and every day to NSA.*
>
> *There is no probable cause. There is no indication of any kind of counterterrorism investigation or operation. It's simply: "Give us the data." …*
>
> *There's really two other factors here in the order that you could get at. One is that the FBI requesting the data. And two, the order directs Verizon to pass all that data to NSA, not the FBI.*
>
> ***Binney:*** *What it is really saying is the NSA becomes a processing service for the FBI to use to interrogate information directly. … The implications are that everybody's privacy is violated, and it can retroactively analyze the activity of anybody in the country back almost 12 years.*
>
> *Now, the other point that is important about that is the serial number of the order: 13-dash-80. That means it's the 80th order of the court in 2013. … Those orders are issued every quarter, and this is the second quarter, so you have to divide 80 by two and you get 40.*
>
> *If you make the assumption that all those orders have to deal with companies and the turnover of material by those companies to the government, then there are at least 40 companies involved in that transfer of information. However, if Verizon, which is Order No. 80, and the first quarter got order No. 1 — then* ***there can be as many as 79 companies involved****.*
>
> *So somewhere between 40 and 79 is the number of companies, Internet and telecom companies, that are participating in this data transfer in the NSA.*
>
> ***Radack:*** *I consider this to be an unlawful order. While I am glad that we finally have something tangible to look at, this order came from the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court. They have no jurisdiction to authorize domestic-to-domestic surveillance.*
>
> ***Binney:*** *Not surprised, but it's documentation that can't be refuted.*
>
> ***Wiebe:*** *It's formal proof of our suspicions.*

Between 79 and 40 'internet and telecom' companies are probably spilling your data to the NSA. Microsoft and Apple are computer software and hardware/software/consumer electronics/content delivery companies, respectively. What other companies could be involved?

What if Epic Systems– a company that specializes in digitizing health care records- got in bed with the NSA? Or what if IBM's offshoot SAP 'looks the other way' while the NSA peruses the databases it designs (and so often have to be tweaked)?

Perhaps the lesson for everyone here is that the systems they use to handle their information need to be guarded as closely as their ability to feed and defend themselves. Perhaps every responsible government should make sure they store their info on systems designed and maintained by their own people. Maybe every-day citizens need to learn about the systems they use and be selective about the information they share– and get pissy if they're not given the option to, say, keep their medical files from Epic. Maybe information technology is like the atom bomb– you're only safe if you've got your own.

That oughta turn the global economy around!

P.S. How creepy do movies like *The Social Network* and *The Internship* look now!

LEAVE A COMMENT

TEMPORA

I will take the heat.

You read it here first.

> *The Tempora programme of Britain's GCHQ eavesdropping agency is known in the intelligence world as a "full take".*

Britain is charging ahead of the pack to spy on everyone in their reach; read the full story here. (Unless, of course, you're on a US military base.)

Citizens should bear in mind that the people listening to/reading these Tempora interceptions often have flexible morals and an inflated sense of entitlement, so it would be foolish to assume that all these intrusions are for the purpose of 'fighting terrorism'. Perhaps in thirty or so years, after we in the USA have our own Perestroika, we'll find out just how much of *our* data was siphoned for pathetic personal vendettas and undermining domestic political opposition.

Something else about *Der Spiegel's* revelations struck a chord with me.

> *"They (NSA) are in bed with the Germans, just like with most other Western states," German magazine Der Spiegel quotes him as saying in an interview published on Sunday that was said to be carried out before he fled to Hong Kong in May and divulged details of extensive secret US surveillance.*
>
> *"Other agencies don't ask us where we got the information from and we don't ask them. That way they can protect their top politicians from the backlash in case it emerges how massively people's privacy is abused worldwide," he said.*

So Berlin, like Washington, is complicit in massive espionage operations directed against their own people; operations that are designed to run outside of scrutiny or accountability.

Weren't the Germans supposed to have a referendum on their American-built, post-war government twelve– or maybe fifteen– years ago now? That's a long time to selectively ignore the law. Perhaps revelations about Tempora and the NSA abuses will shake things up a bit.

So let's have a quick run down of who's sleeping with whom:

Merkel, Putin and "Our American Partners" … a sort of Cold-War Fetish club. It's not far from the situation the Bulgakov lampooned in *The Fatal Eggs* and *The Master and Margarita*. Same shit different day? A bunch of venal businessmen and spooks collaborating to milk the people around them?

In 1990, Charles Vest, the President and Head-Fundraiser for MIT, famously threw up his hands in despair: "What the hell am I supposed to do now?"

Don't worry, Chuck. The party's just getting started.

In case anybody missed it, I highly recommend this USAToday interview with Thomas Drake, William Binney, J. Kirk Wiebe and their lawyer Jesselyn Radack.

Highlights:

> ***Q: Did Edward Snowden do the right thing in going public?***
>
> ***William Binney:*** *We tried to stay for the better part of seven years inside the government trying to get the government to recognize the unconstitutional, illegal activity that they were doing and openly admit that and devise certain ways that would be constitutionally and legally acceptable to achieve the ends they were really after. And that just failed totally because no one in Congress or — we couldn't get anybody in the courts, and certainly the Department of Justice and inspector general's office didn't pay any attention to it. And all of the efforts we made just produced no change whatsoever. All it did was continue to get worse and expand.*
>
> ***Q: So Snowden did the right thing?***
>
> ***Binney:*** *Yes, I think he did.*

Q: You three wouldn't criticize him for going public from the start?

J. Kirk Wiebe: *Correct.*

Binney: *In fact, I think he saw and read about what our experience was, and that was part of his decision-making.*

Wiebe: We failed, yes.

And more **failure**….

Q: Does Congress provide effective oversight for these programs?

Radack: *Congress has been a rubber stamp, basically, and the judicial branch has been basically shut down from hearing these lawsuits because every time they do they are told that the people who are challenging these programs either have no standing or (are covered by) the state secrets privilege, and the government says that they can't go forward. So the idea that we have robust checks and balances on this is a myth.*

Binney: *But the way it's set up now, it's a joke. I mean, it can't work the way it is because they have no real way of seeing into what these agencies are doing. They are totally dependent on the agencies briefing them on programs, telling them what they are doing. And as long as the agencies tell them, they will know. If they don't tell them, they don't know. And that's what's been going on here.*

And the only way they really could correct that is to create billets on these committees and integrate people in these agencies so they can go around every day and watch what is happening and then feed back the truth as to what's going on, instead of the story that they get from the NSA or other agencies. …

Even take the FISA court, for example. The judges signed that order. I mean, I am sure they (the FBI) swore on an affidavit to the judge, "These are the reasons why," but the judge has no foundation to challenge anything that they present to him. What information does the judge have to make a decision against them? I mean, he has absolutely nothing. So that's really not an oversight.

Radack: *The proof is in the pudding. Last year alone, in 2012, they approved 1,856 applications and they denied none. And that is typical from everything that has happened in previous years. … I know the government has been asserting that all of this is kosher and legitimate because the FISA court signed off on it. The FISA court is a secret court — operates in secret. There is only one side and has rarely disapproved anything.*

And the consequences for whistle-blowers who **don't fail**…

Q: What should Edward Snowden expect now?

Binney: *Well, first of all, I think he should expect to be treated just like Bradley Manning (an Army private now being court-martialed for leaking documents to WikiLeaks). The U.S. government gets ahold of him, that's exactly the way he will be treated.*

Q: He'll be prosecuted?

Binney: First tortured, then maybe even rendered and tortured and then incarcerated and then tried and incarcerated or even executed.

Welcome to America!

If I worked for the NSA, or any of the other complicit spying organizations, I'd have a very hard time going to work in the morning. It seems that some NSA employees are even scared of the people on the street around them. Are they scared of each other, too?

LEAVE A COMMENT

RECENT POSTS

Why Five?
Drew Pearson and the Cambridge Five
Kim Philby on Homosexuality
Cleopatra!
Who Was Ernst Henri?

SPLASH

The Banality of Mind Control
Aleister Crowley's System of Control
Tradecrafting Anita Pallenberg

ARCHIVES

May 2015
April 2015

LATEST COMMENTS

Margaret Thatcher kn… on Who Was Winston Churchill…

Robert on Eleanor and ISIS
Games Neocons Play:… on Aleister Crowley's Syste…

anolen on Drew Pearson and the Cambridge…

Robert on Drew Pearson and the Cambridge…

TWEETS

Inspired by the work of SAUL BASS, ART GOODMAN, and DAVE NAGATA. Headline faces by MATT TERICH.
BLOG AT WORDPRESS.COM. THE VERTIGO THEME.

March 2015
February 2015
January 2015
December 2014
November 2014
October 2014
September 2014
August 2014
July 2014
June 2014
May 2014
April 2014
March 2014
February 2014
January 2014
December 2013
November 2013
October 2013
September 2013
August 2013
July 2013
June 2013
May 2013
April 2013
March 2013
February 2013
January 2013
December 2012
November 2012
October 2012
September 2012
August 2012
July 2012

RT @dgolumbia: P. Zimbardo is very weird (see anolen.com/2014/11/16/the…), but important to find boys preferring porn to women, etc. http://t.c… 2 days ago

@CUEwindsearch @rebrandingtime from Wiki on Rall: Rall's cartoons have appeared regularly in Rolling Stone, Time, Fortune and Men's Health. 2 days ago

@CUEwindsearch @rebrandingtime stinks to high heaven. It's a logistical nightmare to plan trips to these regions, let alone broadcasting. 2 days ago

@CUEwindsearch @rebrandingtime cut to drift... that's original. I'll be good to see where they turn up next... Kyiv Post? :) 2 days ago

@CUEwindsearch @sarahcuda @rebrandingtime typical spook response to criticism. 2 days ago

Isn't this interesting! twitter.com/jlaws/status/5… 2 days ago

Follow @aDOTnolen

BLOGROLL

Librivox
The War on Guns
Frank Marcopolos
Cryptogon- Kevin Flaherty outside the Matrix
The Museum of Russian Art
Color Revolutions and Geopolitics
You Can't Polish a Turd
George Fripley's Blog
The Dregs of British History
No Agenda Show
Sipsey Street Irregulars
jonathantaylorthomasnathanmundt.tumblr.com/
Eat the Weeds
Attacking the Demi Puppets
Neil Clark's Blog
Federal Register

CONTACT

aDOTnolen[literally] (at) gmx (dot) com